



# YOUTH CALL TO POLICYMAKERS



*"Put us, the youth, at the center of the TVET revolution in Africa"*



This Policy Brief reflects the collective voices of African youth gathered through the "Make Yourself Heard" survey as part of the Africa Skills Revolution Campaign.

An initiative by:



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## INTRODUCTION

We, the youth of Africa, are the largest and fastest-growing youth population in the world. By 2050, our numbers will double. This is not just a statistic—it's an opportunity to redefine the future of Africa. Currently, our potential is compromised by high youth unemployment, skills development that does not respond to labour market needs, and the lack of clear pathways to meaningful employment. We see hope in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

**TVET has the power to transform lives by teaching skills, boosting employability, promoting entrepreneurship, fostering personal growth and dignity as well as building resilience to economic, social and environmental challenges.**

Through the Africa Skills Revolution Campaign and the "Make Yourself Heard" survey, we have voiced our needs for inclusive systems that cater to the realities of our lives, education that prepares us for our local contexts and future industries, and opportunities that are accessible to every young African, irrespective of geographic or demographic factors.

**We urge policymakers, educators, and leaders across all sectors to engage with us to make this vision a reality.**

This isn't just about investing in robust TVET systems—it's about investing in us, the youth who are ready to drive forward Africa's development through innovation, inclusivity, and growth.



<sup>1</sup> The Make Yourself Heard Survey gathered over 300 responses from young Africans engaged in or aspiring to join TVET education.



## THE CURRENT STATUS OF TVET IN AFRICA

### TVET



#### Hurdles and Setbacks

Societal stigma often views TVET as a fallback option, which limits participation, especially among rural and female groups.

Access issues are prevalent in underserved communities due to the absence of nearby training centers, high costs, and inadequate transportation.

Often, TVET curricula do not align with labor market demands, notably in sectors like renewable energy and ICT.

Systemic gender disparities and insufficient funding hinder the quality of TVET training.

Ill-informed perceptions by parents and guardians on TVET as a viable pathway to employability versus academic qualifications.

### TVET



#### A Catalyst for Change

TVET offers a reliable pathway to employment, enhancing job prospects and empowering many graduates to initiate their own businesses.

TVET promotes innovation through projects that are tailored to local needs, including sustainable agriculture and renewable energy solutions.

TVET significantly impacts communities by addressing local challenges and enhancing resilience and well-being.

By addressing gender barriers and promoting inclusivity, TVET enhances its reach and effectiveness, driving sustainable development for youth in all their diversity.

With the expected uptake of the African Continental Free Trade, undertake skills anticipation and forecasting to project the vocational skills needed to grow our economies.



## OUR CALLS TO POLICYMAKERS



### Expand Access

- Prioritise investment in establishing new TVET training centers in rural and underserved areas, equipped with modern facilities and technology to provide quality and accessible education. Ensure the geographical spread addresses existing gaps in access.
- Develop scholarship programs and financial aid tailored to groups that face systemic barriers, including women, refugees, and persons with disabilities, to alleviate cost barriers. Public-private partnerships can play a key role in funding these initiatives.
- Provide subsidised transport options or boarding facilities to enable rural youth to attend training centres, especially in regions where long distances to institutions are a key barrier.



### Promote Entrepreneurship

- Introduce entrepreneurship modules into TVET curricula, covering topics such as business planning, financial management, marketing, and accessing funding.
- Create incubation programmes and provide seed funding to support TVET graduates in turning innovative ideas into successful businesses. These initiatives should prioritise sectors with significant potential for job creation and community impact, especially in rural areas, where opportunities need to be actively created to stimulate economic development
- Partner with financial institutions to develop tailored loan schemes and micro-finance options for young entrepreneurs.



### Modernise and ensure curriculum relevance

- Collaborate with industry stakeholders to regularly revise TVET curricula to meet emerging labour market needs, focusing on high-demand sectors like renewable energy, digital technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing.
- Integrate work-based learning, including quality apprenticeships and practical training, to ensure students acquire hands-on experience that mirrors real-world applications.
- Embed soft skills training, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, to complement technical skills and improve overall employability.
- Develop and implement robust mechanisms to identify and anticipate evolving skills needs, ensuring education and training systems remain aligned with labour market demands.



### Promote Gender Inclusivity

- Implement specific initiatives to encourage women to enrol in male-dominated fields like STEM, including targeted outreach campaigns, role model programmes, and financial incentives, and collaborate with key stakeholders to ensure a more enabling and supportive environment for female TVET graduates.
- Provide on-site childcare and flexible class schedules at training centres, allowing students with caregiving responsibilities to participate fully in TVET programmes.
- Create safe and inclusive learning environments by training staff to address gender biases and offering support systems for female students.
- Design tailored programmes for marginalised and vulnerable groups, offering support that accounts for their unique circumstances and includes financial assistance when needed.
- Certify competencies and recognise prior learning acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal pathways to facilitate access to the labour market.



## Leverage Digital Platforms

- Develop online and hybrid TVET programmes to accommodate youth in remote areas or those unable to attend in-person training due to work or family commitments.
- Incorporate digital literacy training across all TVET curricula, equipping students with essential skills for the modern workforce.
- Use digital tools for mentorship, networking, and knowledge-sharing, connecting students with industry experts and peers across regions.



## Amplify Youth Voices

- Establish formal mechanisms, such as youth advisory councils, to integrate young people's perspectives into TVET policy and curriculum design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. These councils should include representatives from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
- Conduct regular surveys and focus groups to gather actionable insights on the aspirations and challenges of African youth regarding TVET.



## Strengthen Partnerships

- Establish structured collaborations between governments, private sector actors, educational institutions, trade unions and development organisations to co-create TVET programmes that align with industry needs.
- Encourage the private sector to invest in training infrastructure and provide resources like up-to-date equipment, ensuring students are familiar with current industry standards.
- Encourage partnerships to create internships and quality apprenticeship opportunities to support students to transition seamlessly from training to employment.
- TVET should be complemented by strong career guidance, job counselling, and employment services to support young people in navigating the labour market.
- Establish platforms for collaboration among TVET institutions at the regional level to support knowledge sharing and facilitate the exchange of best practices







## Reshape TVET narratives

- Design and launch nationwide campaigns showcasing the diverse success stories of TVET graduates from a range of backgrounds who have achieved significant career and entrepreneurial milestones. These stories should highlight both traditional trades and modern industries like ICT and renewable energy to appeal to a broad audience.
- Use multimedia platforms, including television, radio, print media, and social media, to ensure the campaign reaches rural, urban, and peri-urban, youth effectively.
- Engage influential figures, such as community leaders, local entrepreneurs, and policymakers, and families to promote the socio-economic value of vocational education. This collaborative effort can help shift perceptions of TVET as a 'last resort' to a prestigious and viable career pathway.
- Emphasising the role of families is crucial, as their support significantly enhances the likelihood of individuals choosing TVET. Awareness campaigns targeted at families can encourage their backing for sons and daughters considering TVET, presenting it as a valuable and viable opportunity rather than a limitation.

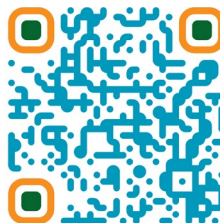


## Align with Agenda 2063

- Incorporate training in climate-smart and environmentally sustainable practices, such as renewable energy systems, sustainable agriculture, and circular economy principles, to align TVET with global sustainability goals.
- Support projects and initiatives that address pressing challenges like waste management, water conservation, and community health, positioning TVET graduates as drivers of socio-economic change.
- Establish metrics for tracking the alignment of TVET programmes with Agenda 2063 goals, ensuring continuous improvement and relevance to Africa's development priorities.



# Know More



## VISIT

<https://www.nepad.org/africaskillsrevolution>

## REFERENCES

AUDA-NEPAD & Humana People to People. (2024). Insights from the 'Make Yourself Heard' Survey: Understanding the Voices of Africa's Youth in TVET.